

## Why Should My Child Have Work Experience while in High School?

There are many ways for your child to learn. Your child learns in the classroom, but sometimes learning becomes more meaningful when it is performed in a real work setting. High school work experience, also known as work-based learning, provides an opportunity to relate what he or she is learning in school to the world of work.

In addition, high school work experience can provide valuable skills that may not be as easily learned in the high school classroom. It also allows your child to explore various work situations before entering post-high school training.

**Some examples of skills that your child may develop by participating in work experiences include:**

- ★ Time management and meeting deadlines
- ★ Following directions
- ★ Problem-solving
- ★ Interpersonal communication
- ★ Responsibility
- ★ Leadership and working on a team

**In order for your child's high school work experience to be meaningful and valuable, it should:**

- ★ Relate to your child's interests
- ★ Help your child see what working life is like
- ★ Help your child discover his or her likes and dislikes
- ★ Help your child find his or her strengths and weaknesses
- ★ Help your child recognize the value of his or her academic learning

**Work Experience Helps Students Make Informed Career Choices!**

High school work experience answers the questions, "Why do I have to learn this?" and "Would I want to do this job long-term?" It helps your child select an occupation wisely and prepare realistically for real work. It also helps develop the skills, attitudes and habits needed to be successful. By working beside experienced professionals, your child will learn what it takes to enter and be successful in his or her field of interest.

## What Other Ways Can My Child Experience Occupations?

Your child may have the opportunity to participate in other activities that provide exposure to the world of work. These activities may include:

- ★ **Career Fairs** - Many business people come to one location to provide information about their jobs. Your child may have the opportunity to listen to several people talk about their occupations.
- ★ **Guest Speakers** - Your child's teacher, counselor or career specialist may arrange for guest speakers to come and talk to a group of students. Have your child watch for these opportunities at school.
- ★ **Field Trips** - Your child may be able to participate in a field trip to a business. The business offers the students a tour of their facility. Your children would see and hear workers performing their day-to-day tasks. He or she would also learn about the many different types of workers required to operate a business.



### For more information:

RI School-to-Career: [www.ristc.org](http://www.ristc.org)

RI Youth Entrepreneurship Program:  
[www.youthentrepreneurs.com](http://www.youthentrepreneurs.com)

National Mentoring Center: [www.nwrel.org/mentoring](http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring)

Job Shadowing: [www.jobshadow.org](http://www.jobshadow.org)

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse:  
[www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)

Junior Achievement: [www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org)

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA): [www.fbla-pbl.org](http://www.fbla-pbl.org)

Future Farmers of America: [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)

Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA):  
[www.deca.org](http://www.deca.org)

DLT is an equal opportunity employer/program, auxiliary aids & services are available on request to individuals with disabilities.

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Does your child have the knowledge needed to head down the right occupational path?

## Work Experience Options for High School Students



**Help your child decide what type of work experience is best while in school**

**CRN** Rhode Island Career Resource Network  
RI Department of Labor & Training  
1511 Pontiac Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920  
(401) 462-8790 phone  
(401) 462-8766 fax  
(401) 462-8006 tdd  
[www.dlt.ri.gov/crn](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/crn)

## What Work Experience Options Exist for High School Students?

Your child has many options for participating in high school work-based learning. Work-based learning may consist of career exploration and awareness, work experience, structured training, and/or mentoring at a worksite.

**Job Shadowing:** In a job shadow experience your child observes a worker for part of a day or for several days, at the worker's job site. The job shadowing experience is a short, unpaid exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest to your child. Your child would witness first hand the work environment, employability and occupational skills required of the job, the value of professional training and potential career options. Job shadowing is designed to increase career awareness, help model student behavior through examples, and reinforce the link between classroom learning and work requirements.

**Mentoring:** Mentoring is a long-term relationship between your child and an adult with similar occupational interests. The adult mentor offers support, guidance, motivation and assistance as your child enters new areas of career exploration. Be sure your child's school requires background checks on adults who wish to act as mentors. This work experience is unpaid.

**Service-Learning:** When your child participates in service-learning, he or she provides a service to the community and completes a school-based project that applies academic learning to the community service project. For example, if the community service project is to clean trash out of a stream, the learning component may be to analyze the trash and where it comes from, then create ways to educate the community about strategies to reduce pollution. In this service-learning example your child might learn about water quality and laboratory



analysis, pollution concerns, and communicating with the public. Your child might also be asked to reflect on his or her personal and career interests related to the service learning project. Service learning is generally unpaid.

**School-Based Enterprises:** Your child may want to participate in running a small business that is operated at the school. Junior Achievement is an organization that often sets up school-based enterprises that allow students to learn overall business operations such as managing costs, ordering supplies, working under pressure, conserving supplies and maintaining facilities. Your child's school may also allow students to operate the student store, or to organize a fund-raiser. School-based enterprises are generally unpaid work experiences.

**High School Internships:** Internships provide structured, on-the-job work activities that complement classroom learning. Your child may earn school credit for participating in an internship. Internships are usually for a specified period of time ranging from two to eight weeks. Some internships are available over the summer months. There are both paid and non-paid internships.

**Cooperative Education:** High school cooperative education programs provide job-related classroom instruction in combination with on-the-job instruction. In addition to other required courses, your child would receive part-time employment, ideally at a job relating to his or her occupation choice, and in-school classroom instruction relating specifically and generally to his or her job and the world of work. Employers enter into a work agreement with the school, student and student's parents outlining and developing a training plan leading to job employability in the occupation of choice. Most cooperative education programs are provided through the career and technical education program at your child's high school. In the cooperative education program, your child would receive school credit for both work-related classroom instruction and for his or her work experience in a real work setting. Many cooperative education programs include paid work experience.

**Youth Apprenticeship:** The youth apprenticeship program combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction. A detailed training plan is developed between the employer and your child. An apprenticeship program will last from two to five years, with only one or two years of the apprenticeship taking place while your child is in high school. Your child would be paid for on-the-job training portion of the apprenticeship.

## Work-Related Classes, Clubs and Associations Available at Schools

In addition to career and technical education classes that provide academic subject matter taught with relevance to the real world, many high schools provide classes, clubs or association memberships that can bring work-related experiences to your child. Ask your school about:

**Junior Achievement:** Junior Achievement has a range of programs available that teach students from elementary school through high school about the workplace. In addition to the school-based enterprise described earlier, they also have a one-semester economics course, a web-based business simulation, a course that develops interpersonal and problem-solving skills needed for the workplace, and a personal finance course.

**Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), Future Farmers of America (FFA) Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA):** FBLA, DECA, FFA and FCCLA are student associations found at many high schools. Students who join these associations plan to prepare for careers in business and business-related fields (FBLA), marketing, management and entrepreneurship (DECA), agriculture and agriculture-related careers (FFA), or family and consumer science careers (FCCLA). Students gain career awareness through conferences, networking with professionals and business tours. They complete programs designed to enhance leadership, communication, teamwork and socialization skills. Students in these associations may enter skill competitions and be eligible for prizes, scholarships and internships. Your child's school may have other opportunities for work-related exploration. Ask your child's school counselor about available options.

